Top questions

What is Office 365? How is it different from Microsoft Office?

"Office 365" refers to subscription plans that include access to Office applications plus other productivity services that are enabled over the Internet (cloud services), such as Lync web conferencing and Exchange Online hosted email for business, and additional online storage with OneDrive and Skype world minutes for home.

Many Office 365 plans also include the desktop version of the latest Office applications, which users can install across multiple computers and devices. The Office 365 plans that are online-only are a great choice for certain business needs, and they are compatible with desktop versions of the latest version of Office, Office 2010, Office 2007 (with slightly limited functionality), Office 2011 for Mac, and Office 2008 for Mac.

All Office 365 plans are paid for on a subscription basis, monthly or annually.

"Microsoft Office" is the name we still use for our familiar productivity software. Office suites have traditionally included applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. All the new Office suites (for example, Office Standard 2013) include the latest versions of these applications. These suites can be installed on only one PC and do not come with any cloud-based services included in Office 365.

Will Office 365 work with my copy of Office?

Office 365 works best with the latest version of Office, Office 2010, and Office 2011 for Mac. Office 365 works with slightly limited functionality with Office 2007. If you have an earlier edition of Office, you will need to update to a newer version of Office in order to use Office 365; or you can subscribe to one of the many Office 365 plans that include the latest version of Office. In addition to getting the latest version of Office as part of your subscription, you will also get automatic updates, so your Office will always be up to date. Compare plans.

• Is Internet access required for Office 365?

Internet access is required to install and activate all Office 365 plans and to manage your subscription account. Internet connectivity is also required to access Office 365 cloud productivity services, including email, conferencing, IT management, and other services.

Many Office 365 plans also include the desktop version of Office, for example, Office 365 Business Premium and Office 365 Enterprise E3. One of the benefits of having the desktop

version of Office applications is that you can work offline and have the confidence that the next time you connect to the Internet all your work will automatically sync, so you never have to worry about your documents being up to date. Your desktop version of Office is also automatically kept up to date and upgraded when you connect to the Internet, so you always have the latest tools to help you work. Compare Office 365 plans.

What is the cloud?

"The cloud" is a friendly way of describing web-based computing services that are hosted outside of your organization. When you use cloud-based services, your IT infrastructure resides off your property (off-premises), and is maintained by a third party (hosted), instead of residing on a server at your home or business (on-premises) that you maintain. With Office 365, for example, information storage, computation, and software are located and managed remotely on servers owned by Microsoft. Many services you use every day are a part of the cloud—everything from web-based email to mobile banking and online photo storage. Because this infrastructure is located online or "in the cloud," you can access it virtually anywhere, from a PC, tablet, smartphone, or other device with an Internet connection.

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How many users does Office 365 support?

Office 365 is highly scalable and can support everything from a one-person business to companies with tens of thousands of users:

Office 365 Business plans are best for companies with one to 300 users.

Office 365 Enterprise plans fit organizations ranging in size from a single employee to 50,000-plus users.

What mobile apps are available for Office?

Office for iPad: View, create and edit documents with touch-friendly Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps. You can count on Office for iPad to keep your content and formatting intact so the document looks great when you're back on your PC or Mac. In Word, add comments or track changes while you work together with others. Review and update Excel spreadsheets and easily add formulas or charts. Make changes to PowerPoint presentations and project them wirelessly on a big screen.

You can view documents for free with Office for iPad. Editing and creating documents requires an eligible Office 365 subscription: Office 365 Home, Office 365 Personal, Office 365 University, Office 365 Business, Office 365 Business Premium, Office 365 Enterprise E3 and E4, Office 365

Enterprise E3 and E4 (Government Pricing), Office 365 Government E3 and E4, Office 365 Education E3 and E4 for Students, Office 365 Education E3 and E4 for Faculty, and Office 365 ProPlus.

Office Mobile: Office Mobile is preinstalled on Windows Phone 8 and is available for select models of iPhone and Android phones. Office Mobile offers great Office content viewing and onthe-go content editing capabilities. And you can count on Office Mobile to keep your content and formatting intact so the document still looks great when you're back on your PC or Mac. Office Mobile for iPhone and Android phones can be used for free for non-commercial use, simply download the app from the store on your phone.

In order to edit or create documents or to access documents stored in SharePoint and OneDrive for Business on premises, you must have a qualifying Office 365 plan: Office 365 Business Premium, Office 365 Enterprise, Office 365 Enterprise E3 and E4 (Government Pricing), Office 365 Government E3 and E4, Office 365 Education E3 and E4 for Students, Office 365 Education E3 and E4 for Faculty, Office 365 ProPlus, and Office 365 University.

Outlook Mobile: Windows Phone 8 includes a pre-installed version of Outlook that you can use to access your Outlook.com, Office 365, or Exchange email.

OneNote: You can use the mobile OneNote app to access your notes while on the go. This app is available on Windows Phone 8, iPhone, iPad, and Android phones.

OWA: If you have an Office 365 subscription that includes Exchange Online, you can use the OWA app to sort, scan, and respond to email, and stay on top of your schedule. This app is available on iPhone and iPad.

Lync Mobile: If your organization uses the newest version of Lync, you can use the mobile Lync app to stay connected while on your mobile device. This app is available on Windows Phone 8, iPhone, iPad, and Android phones.

SharePoint Newsfeed: If your organization uses the newest version of SharePoint, you can use the SharePoint Newsfeed app to access your newsfeed from your mobile device. This app is available on Windows Phone 8, iPhone, and iPad.